DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 400 901 JC 960 671

TITLE	Strategic Directions for the University and Community College System of Nevada.
INSTITUTION	Nevada Univ. and Community Coll. System, Reno. Office of the Chancellor.
PUB DATE	Apr 96
NOTE	11p.; For the 1994 Strategic Directions report, see ED 387 158.
PUB TYPE	Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*College Planning; College Role; Community Colleges; Educational Improvement; Educational Policy; Higher Education; Organizational Effectiveness; *Organizational Objectives; *Policy Formation; State Universities; *Statewide Planning; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	*Nevada; University and Community College System of Nevada

ABSTRACT

The Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada meets annually with campus administrators to articulate a systemwide vision and provide strategic directions. The eight strategic directions identified during the 1996 meeting were: (1) undergraduate access and growth, including an emphasis on educational quality, access and retention, and technological innovations; (2) research and graduate/professional education, including the promotion of both basic and applied research; (3) responding to the economic and educational needs of the state, including collaborative programs with other state agencies and using research, outreach, and community service to contribute to economic development; (4) ensuring accountability to the citizens of Nevada and exercising responsible stewardship of resources; (5) reviewing and enhancing planning efforts; (6) striving to obtain additional resources from both state and non-state sources and emphasizing collaborative programs within the system; (7) maximizing the use of technology where it is cost-efficient and cost-effective to do so; and (8) monitoring the productivity of faculty and administrators, monitoring administrative costs throughout the system, and monitoring student outcomes from the perspective of the productivity of student learning and completion. (HAA)

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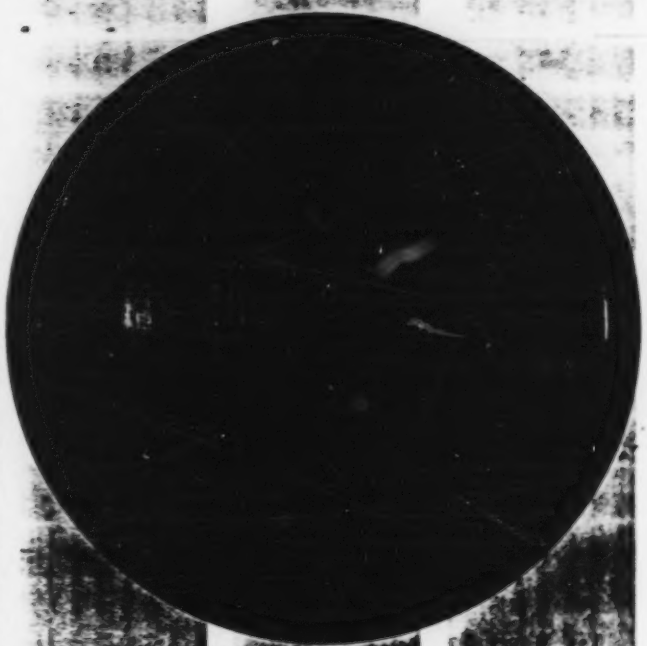

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Strategic Directions for the University and Community College System of Nevada

JC 960 671

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Introduction

The University and Community College System of Nevada (UCCSN) provides all public postsecondary education in Nevada — an opportunity and privilege as well as an enormous responsibility and challenge. As we approach the twenty-first century, education remains a key component to the success and prosperity of Nevada and the nation. In a rapidly changing society propelled by advancing technology, higher education institutions play an increasingly significant role in preparing students of all ages to become productive and contributing members of their communities, to meet state and regional workforce needs and to continuously retool and upgrade their skills and knowledge. Higher education institutions also continue to play a key role in providing basic and applied research that contributes to a growing and essential base of knowledge that enables our economy to grow and diversify.

The demands on higher education are great; the expectations large. The basis of our democratic society relies on a citizenry that is educated and able to participate in a meaningful manner, able to make decisions and choices in an ever more complex world. For our society to prosper in the twenty-first century, it will need the contributions of all its citizens. As knowledge and technology evolve and change, and as the demographics of the nation change and move us toward a more diverse society, we must meet our greatest challenge: to provide the education necessary for all of our citizens to thrive and prosper.

As a public system of higher education, our commitment must be to provide access and opportunity to the residents of Nevada to a quality educational experience. In order to fulfill this commitment, the UCCSN community must embrace a shared vision for higher education and endorse common directions for reaching this vision. The Regents' Strategic Directions define this vision.

Strategic Directions

The UCCSN Board of Regents first adopted Strategic Directions in 1992 as part of a revised academic planning process. Through two subsequent revisions, the adopted Directions have formed the foundation of a strategic planning process and provided a systemwide structure for that process. Over the course of these four years, the System and the campuses made great progress. As our planning process has matured and evolved, so too must our vision document. In this revision of the Strategic Directions, we have maintained the strength of our earlier vision, sharpened and tailored that vision to our sense of the challenges of the next decade and set priorities for Nevada higher education in 1996-2006.

Over the next ten years, we envision eight key issues that will shape the goals and Strategic Directions of the UCCSN:

Ends Goals

- Undergraduate Access and Growth
- Research and Graduate/Professional Education
- State Needs

Means Goals

- Accountability
- Planning
- Resources
- Technology
- Productivity

The three "ends goals" require the System to examine its priorities and make choices as policies are set. The five "means goals" require the System to examine its procedures and the manner in which business is conducted. This is the framework within which the Board has chosen to articulate the UCCSN Strategic Directions for Nevada for 1996-2006.

In addition to these eight goals, the Board reaffirms its position regarding values and ethics. The Board recognizes the important role that higher education plays in building common societal values and ethics in Nevada and the country and continually seeks ways to promote and enhance this role.

Finally, the Board has also charged the Chancellor with developing indicators for each Strategic Direction which will enable the System to measure progress towards its goals. The Chancellor is working with the UCCSN institutions to develop these "Performance Indicators" and a companion document will be developed that ties the performance indicators to the Strategic Directions.

Undergraduate Access and Growth

- The UCCSN will emphasize undergraduate education and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in undergraduate programs.
- The UCCSN will enhance access and retention and increase participation rates in public postsecondary education.
- The UCCSN will utilize innovative applications of technology to extend access and enhance learning productivity.
- The UCCSN will recognize and reflect the diversity of society within its institutions.
- The UCCSN will articulate its programs with K-12 education and will enhance transfer and articulation for students among the UCCSN institutions.

As the State's public system of higher education, our first priority is to provide access to the residents of the State to an educational experience of the highest quality. An equal commitment to access and quality must be made: access without excellence offers mere mediocrity; excellence without concern for access denies to many people a fair and full measure of its benefits.

The issue of current and future growth in student enrollments provides a major challenge to this State. The rate of population growth in Nevada, particularly in southern Nevada, has been among the highest in the nation throughout the past decade, accompanied by greater diversity. Systemwide enrollment has increased 59% over the last ten years, and this expansion is likely to continue as the number of Nevada high school graduates is projected to increase 77% from 1996-2006. Meeting this demand will continue to require a major commitment of revenues from the State and the overall cost of education will need to be continually examined to ensure cost does not become a barrier to access. The System will continue to be challenged to diversify its student body to match that of the overall population of the State.

Related to these growth rates, the continuation rate of recent Nevada high school graduates into postsecondary education is among the lowest in the nation. Additionally, the proportion of the Nevada population with a Bachelor's degree or higher is the lowest in the western states and below the national average. Such statis-

tics point to serious barriers for Nevada's efforts to expand and diversify its economy as more and more jobs require some education beyond the high school level. Another fundamental challenge then is to increase the participation rates in postsecondary education and to raise the level of educational attainment in the general population.

Research and Graduate/Professional Education

- The UCCSN will support graduate education and research at levels that are nationally competitive.
- The UCCSN will provide access to Nevadans to programs leading to advanced degrees and professional qualifications in order to develop and retain the talent of its citizens in-state.
- The UCCSN will selectively develop graduate education systemwide that serves the needs of Nevadans.
- The UCCSN will promote both basic and applied research that will meet the needs of the State, region, and nation and enhance the quality of upper-division undergraduate education.

As with undergraduate education, our first priority is to provide access to graduate and professional educational opportunities of the highest quality. Programs leading to advanced degrees and professional credentials for Nevadans are a key to keeping our best and brightest students in the State.

A vigorous program of research at our universities and our research institute not only meets State needs, but also helps to establish the academic stature of these institutions nationally and internationally and enhances the undergraduate educational experience. Research also contributes significantly to the economic development and diversification of the State as well as being a vital element in the intellectual and artistic environment of the State.

Graduate programs need to be supported at a level that ensures their quality at a caliber of national competitiveness. This demands selectivity in the programs developed and nurtured as significant resources will be required. Programs that support the needs of our State and its communities as well as those that enhance undergraduate education will be a priority.

State Needs

- The UCCSN will provide leadership in supporting the economic health and growth of the State through its programs leading to workforce development, skill training and lifelong learning.
- The UCCSN will emphasize and enhance collaborative programs with other state institutions and agencies.
- Through its research, outreach and community service efforts, the UCCSN will contribute to the State's agenda in the areas of economic development and diversification, health care, social services, resource management and educational endeavors.

The UCCSN is a major resource for the State of Nevada. The System provides virtually all higher educational programs for the State's citizens. The System also provides a variety of other key resources and programs to the State. It collaborates with business and industry to provide customized workforce training, attracts research dollars to the State that feed back into the economy, and contributes to the intellectual and cultural life of Nevada's communities in countless ways.

We recognize, however, that we can become an even better resource to the State as we enhance our participation in specific areas of State needs. Through the research done on our campuses as well as through traditional community service activities of our faculties and students, we can contribute to resolving issues on the State agenda. A few of the areas where we can provide expertise include educational reform, teacher training, health care, social services and economic development/diversification.

In addition to the three Strategic Directions related to the Board's vision for higher education in Nevada, the following five Strategic Directions relate to the manner in which the UCCSN will conduct its business and encompass the Board's charge to management. While no less important than the Strategic Directions related to Board vision, these five directions regarding accountability, planning, resources, technology and productivity relate to procedures that seem almost self-evident. They could be considered principles of good practice and relate to the Board's quality-assurance function. These five Strategic Directions are:

Accountability

- The UCCSN will continue its commitment to evaluation and assessment to ensure accountability to the citizens of Nevada.
- As a public institution in the State of Nevada, the UCCSN is committed to conducting its business in an open manner in accordance with the State's Open Meeting Laws.
- The UCCSN will exercise responsible stewardship of resources.

Planning

- The UCCSN will continuously review and enhance its planning efforts and will integrate planning and budgeting.
- As part of its planning function and also to enhance accountability, the UCCSN will establish principles of benchmarking against peers and make assessments using quantifiable performance indicators.

Resources

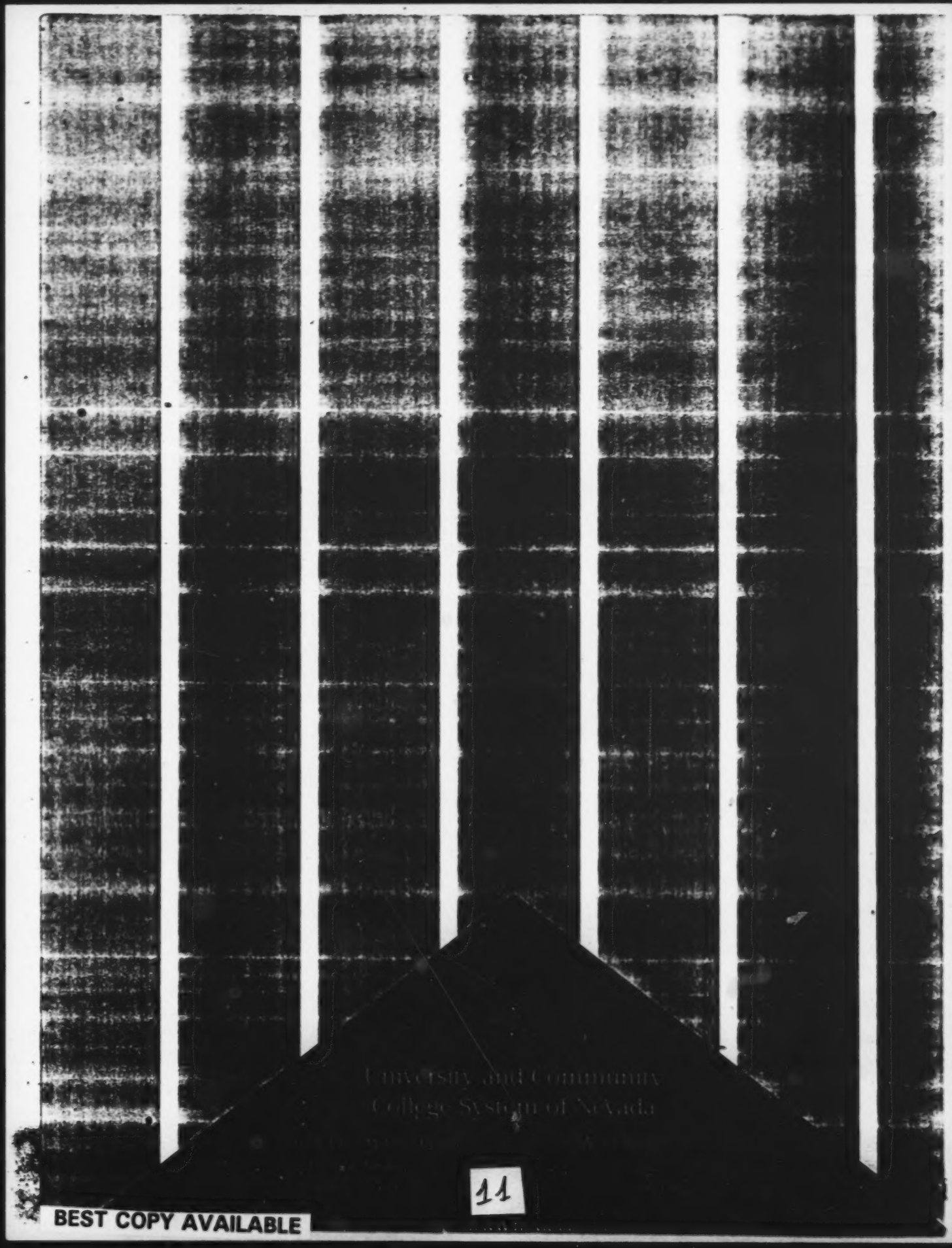
- The UCCSN will strive to obtain additional resources from both state and non-state sources and also to allocate the resources it has to provide a maximum return on investment.
- The UCCSN will emphasize collaborative programs within the System, and between the System and other institutions to maximize effectiveness.

Technology

- The UCCSN will maximize the use of technology where it is cost-efficient and cost-effective to do so.

Productivity

- The UCCSN will monitor the productivity of its faculty and administrators.
- The UCCSN will monitor administrative costs throughout the System.
- The UCCSN will monitor student outcomes from the perspective of the productivity of student learning and completions.



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